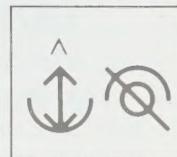


COMMUNICATING TOGETHER



A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ABOUT AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 1988



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PENNSYLVANIA — MY BIGGEST ADVENTURE YET

KARI HARRINGTON

Kari Harrington is the regular columnist for the "Family and Community" section of Communicating Together. She was recently a speaker at the Long Term Loan Students' Conference in Grantville, Pennsylvania, a meeting sponsored by the Pennsylvania Special Education Assistive Device Center, Elizabethtown Hospital and Rehabilitation Center. We felt her informative and humorous account of this experience should be shared in full, and present it as the feature of this issue. Kari will resume her regular role with "Family and Community" in the next issue.

Having adventures and building memories are things I've been doing all my life. Of course, every trip I take by myself in my electric wheelchair, even if it's just touring around town or going to the shopping mall, is an adventure. When you rely on controls, motors and air filled tires to replace your legs, you never quite know what may happen!

Imagine then, my wary excitement when I accepted Colleen Haney's invitation to make a presentation at a conference in Grantville, Pennsylvania, (near Harrisburg) sponsored by the Pennsylvania Special Education Assistive Device Center. It meant flying in two planes to get there and two more to return. Not only had I never flown before, but my mom, who was going with me, had only flown twice and those times she had tagged along with people who really knew what they were doing. This time, she would be on her own and have me and my wheels to think about as well.

All our arrangements were made for us. Colleen, who along with her associates organized the whole conference, booked our room at the Holiday Inn where the conference was to be held. Nancy Holland, also of the Pennsylvania Special Education Assistive Device Centre, looked after our transportation — even to having wheelchair transportation ready and waiting for us at the

Harrisburg airport. She called about a week before we left, giving us a number to contact at U.S. Air regarding putting my electric wheelchair in baggage. That phone call to U.S. Air led to a minor panic. (Of course, as my mother admits, it doesn't take much to set her into a panic!)

The Joys of Travelling with a Wheelchair

We were to fly on DC 9s. On this plane, electric wheelchairs may be stowed upright if they are less than 38" high and precautions have been taken to ensure there is no possibility of a short circuit. Acid batteries, if used, must be placed in appropriate spill-proof containers and sealed. Dry cell batteries of the Gel nonspillable kind are much preferred. If a chair cannot meet these requirements, then it must be taken apart and each part carefully packaged and labelled. Well, a quick measure of my Fortress, which was the only really usable chair I had, revealed that even without the head rest, it was 42" high. Immediately my mom envisioned herself at Harrisburg airport unpacking crates and trying to assemble my dismembered chair. Up to this point in her life, the most she had done when things went wrong with my chair was phone my dad! Both she and I were at the point of running out the door to buy a push chair, when dad and she realized that if the back of my chair could come out like it did when it was new, we wouldn't have any problem. About a year ago, the back of my chair had started to bend backwards from all the stress on it and my dad had to straighten it and then weld it to make it stronger. A call to Fortress International stating our problems saved the day. They were terrific. Dad took my chair to them the next morning. On the spot, they made a new temporary back which would go in and out just fine and by the time I got home from Pennsylvania they had a much stronger, reinforced back all ready for my perma-

nent use. In addition, they gave us invaluable advice and service. We had ordered Gel batteries to save all that packaging stuff and had been told that we could charge them with the regular charger we used for the acid batteries. In conversation with Stan Cooper of Fortress, dad checked this out. Only the newer chargers have a switch which allows the charging of acid or Gell batteries. Mine didn't have such a switch, but Fortress kindly traded our charger for a new one with this capability. Talk about luck!

We learned another good tip about the controls. By sliding out the wand that the controls are on, turning it upside down, and sliding it back in place, there is less risk of damage to the joy stick or the control unit while it is in transit. Now mom felt moderately confident about transporting the chair and because she did, I did too. Nervousness is catchy, isn't it?

Presentations Our Way

In the meantime, I had been working on my presentation for a couple of weeks, and at last, it was as ready as it would ever be. My training to be a presenter through the Susan Wilson Community Information Service at ESCI really prepared me for this job and I felt pretty confident. My subject was on making presentations using augmentative communication and I called it "Presentations 'OUR' Way." The "our" stands for Sue, John, Ann and I who took our presenter training together and also for all the augmentative communicators who are, or will be, making presentations in the future. Everyone got to meet Ann, John and Sue in our video "Speaking for Ourselves", which I showed at the end of my talk.

Sometimes I don't know whether I am just incredibly lucky or whether I just have a lot of good professional friends who make things happen for me at the right times like those in the Augmentative

Communication Service at the Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre. I guess, "I'm incredibly lucky" covers it either way. One week before we were to leave, the woman's voice that I had been waiting for for so long was installed in my Epson. It was just in time for me to program in my presentation. I love the voice and feel proud when I hear myself talk. Right now, when you have the "Real Voice" you cannot have the Trine software in your Epson as well. I do miss the Trine with its word processing capabilities. Without it, if I make a mistake or leave out a word when I'm entering my messages, I have to type that whole section over again instead of editing that one word. Still I wouldn't trade back for anything. I know that eventually someone will find a way for us to have a pleasant, appropriate voice along with the other capabilities.

Now my presentation was programmed, we had our tickets, the wheelchair problem was solved and it was Wednesday, June 15, the first day of the Long Term Loan Students' Conference, "Communication in Many Forms". After a restless night filled with excited anticipation, mom and I got up at 4 a.m. By 5, dad had us loaded into the van and we started on the first leg of our long trek, as it was suggested that wheelchairs should arrive at the airport an hour and a half before departure time. By 7 a.m., I was in a push chair and my Fortress was readied for the baggage compartment. At 7:20 a.m., I was pushed to the door of the plane and then transferred to a straight back, which is just a fancy name for one of those very narrow, dolly-like contraptions that are used to move fridges and heavy appliances. If you have ever seen the aisle of a DC 9, then you know why they use such a narrow straight back. I still wondered if even that would get through, but it did. The stewardess found the one seat on the whole airplane whose aisle arm would swing up so I could get into the seat without being lifted over the arm. Before I knew it, I was quite comfortably seated. I hardly knew when we left the ground and in minutes we were cruising along above the wisps of clouds. It was a beautiful day and I could see so much, but we were only up a short

time and then we began our descent to Erie, Pennsylvania. Going up is great because you're sort of pushed back in your seat, like in a reclining chair, and I felt very secure. Landing is the opposite of course. Even wiggly, my hand that doesn't work so well, was gripping whenever and whatever it could. We took on some passengers at Erie and were off again. The next stop was Pittsburgh, where we had to change planes. Wheelchair people are first on and last off the plane, but that means you get the royal treatment. The stewards and stewardesses are free then to help and were terrific. They were fun too.

Meeting New Friends in the Airport

Back onto the dolly, into a push chair, and with computer, battery charger and baggage in hand, we began our three hour stopover in the Pittsburgh airport. While mom and an airport attendant were figuring out a way to get me and all our stuff from Gate Two, where we deplaned, to Gate Twenty-four which was at the extreme other end of a very big, sprawling airport, I spotted another wheelchair coming from a gate across from us. When I recognized a Dectalker resting on the person's lap, I knew she must be headed for the same place as us. Sure enough, Maria Kripotos and her teacher and friend, Sandy Whatmough, had just arrived from Providence, Rhode Island. They would continue to Harrisburg on the same flight as us. Maria had tons more equipment than I did. We chatted a bit, our airport attendant finally arrived with another

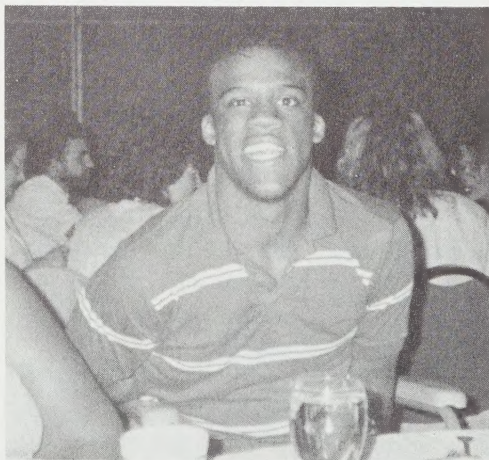
wheelchair and we loaded up the three chairs. The attendant pushed one, Sandy and my mom the others and we made it to Gate Twenty-four. Having Maria and Sandy with us was so much fun that nothing seemed to be a problem. A relay system for the washroom meant that someone could mind all the equipment while the others were away. We had a nice lunch and before we knew it, it was time to board the plane for our last lap.

Harrisburg has a beautiful airport. Maybe, because it is smaller than the other two, it didn't seem so overwhelming. Even before the baggage had arrived, Mrs. Walters, our wheelchair bus driver, greeted us and was ready to help in any way she could. Mom had her fingers and toes crossed — firstly, that the wheelchair would arrive at all, (she remembered all the stories she had heard where the baggage went one way while the people went another!), — secondly, that it would arrive in working order. It arrived! Mom put it back together, tucked in a few wires that seemed to be hanging out of the batteries in the wrong places, plugged in the plugs, closed her eyes in silent prayer and flicked the switch. We just smiled at each other; we were so relieved. It worked just fine. Maria and Sandy weren't as lucky with Maria's chair. It wouldn't go, and she had to stay in an airport push chair for the whole conference. We loaded the bus and drove to the Holiday Inn at Grantville, arriving just half an hour before my first presentation.

At Last — the Conference

If you think it has taken me a long time to get around to talking about the conference, you must remember it *did* take me a long time to get there. It was really worth it though.

"Communication in Many Forms" was a great conference in every way. The facilities were perfect. Everything was well organized, even to delightful entertainment in the evenings. The first night, it was a dinner and dance. An added touch was that each student and presenter received a "neat" turquoise blue T-shirt with the name of the conference on it. I wore mine to school the first day I got back so everyone would know



Kari's new friend Jamie.

where I had been. Each day was filled with varied and interesting presentations. The biggest problem was trying to choose which of the concurrent sessions to attend. Even though many of these sessions were repeated at another time, they all sounded so good, you hated to miss any one of them. However, the very best thing of all was the people I met, most of whom had come from different parts of Pennsylvania. I will never forget Maria, Alec, Jamie, John and little seven-year-old Hope, who made me melt every time she smiled at me.

Maria is nineteen and is the first girl to be named the Young Adult Ambassador for the Easter Seal Society of Rhode Island. She uses the Words+ to augment her communication. The Dectalker provided her with a pleasant, fairly easy to understand, female voice. Maria made a presentation telling about her personal experiences using technology for speech, mobility and written output. She explained the positive effect all this technology has had on her life. Maria and I have much in common, including the same birthday.

Alec Kish and his mom and dad met us as we were heading off to bed after the Magic Show on Thursday night. We ended up in an empty conference room with both our Epsos and Alec's Light Talker as well. Alec has both right now to try to decide which is easier for him to access and best meets his needs. Alec is really into computers and knows so much about them. We compared notes on which system left you with more memory, my Real Voice or his SpeechPac. Alec and I talked for a long time and could have gone on longer, but finally mom reminded me there was another busy day coming up fast.

Jamie and his mom and dad shared a table with us for several of our meals. Jamie will attend Edinboro University this coming year. A few months ago I heard about the Special Needs program and services being offered at Edinboro, and thought I might like to look at it as a possibility for my future. What a wonderful coincidence to have the chance to talk first hand with someone who was going to go there and to compare notes with Jamie's parents about the opportunities in

Pennsylvania and Ontario.

Little Hope Johnson stole my heart the first moment I saw her. She was at the conference with her grandma and grandpa. Hope is learning to use a Light Talker, but I didn't get to see her with it. We sat next to each other every chance we got and did a lot of smiling and laughing together. I wished Hope had had a symbol board of some sort or even a picture board. She seemed so bright and aware and I'm sure she could have communicated many things. I'm getting pretty good at conversing with people who use their eyes to locate things, and I would love to try with Hope. It would be so good for her to have more than one way to communicate, and I wanted so much to know what she was thinking.



Hope Johnson

Something to Interest Everyone

Aside from my own two presentations and Maria's, I attended as many sessions as I could including: "Just For You: A Workshop About Siblings", "Augmentative Communication in a Regular Classroom", "The Classroom Teacher: One of the Strongest Links in an Augmentative and Alternative Communication Program", a presentation by a local self-help group which had been going for a year, and "Ideas for Nonverbal Communication Through Sound and Music". At the session about "Independence Dogs", I met Shantih, a service dog which was trained to help a physically disabled person in much the same way as a Seeing-Eye dog is trained to help the blind. In the session "Project Magic and Augmentative Communication", I got to be a magician's assistant. My trick

didn't work too well because Gary Stotsky put the card in the wrong place or something like that, but it was funny. Gary is really a speech pathologist and uses magic as a motivational tool to develop communication interaction between augmentative communication users and their peers. There were many sessions about technology in all its forms and about telecommunication with helpful things to know about such as Bulletin Boards and other information services.

The "Word Strategy" workshop by Debbie Laurent and Maria Young caught my interest too. Over the years, I've developed lots of little strategies to help me in using augmentative communication, and I could relate to what they were talking about. They discussed the general progression from spelling to functional communication with an organization software for vocabulary storage. I came away thinking I might like to try it.

Probably the session that had the most impact on me was Lake Kissick's presentation called "Independent Living: A Risky But Profitable Business". At twenty-three, the time is coming for me to make some important decisions about my future. It's a scary business. Listening to Lake's eloquent words gave me a bit of courage in this direction because he has overcome so much and is surviving nicely. It is hard, though, especially when you have lived at home all your life with parents who have worked to make you safe and comfortable and to reduce as many of the risks in your life as possible.

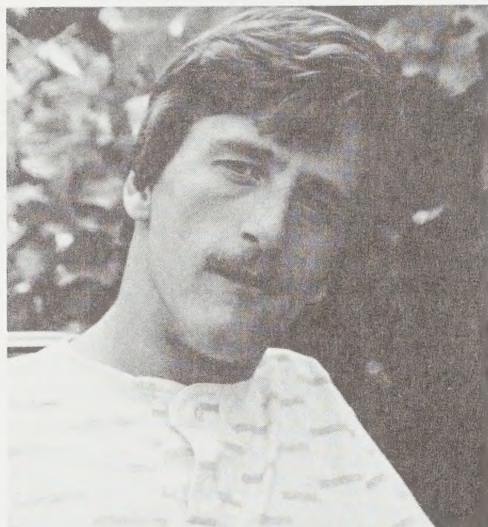
This trip to Pennsylvania was a real learning experience for me and my mom. We did plan ahead to reduce what risks we could, but, in some ways, it was still a trip into the unknown. Luckily, all those "what if" things we thought of and worried about, but couldn't really plan ahead for, never did happen. In our own way, we took a risk, and you're right, Lake, it was a profitable business.

Thank you, Colleen Haney for inviting us, for the wonderful Pennsylvania hospitality, for an excellent conference where we learned a lot, and for my first tremendous experience at flying. It was a stupendous adventure and I built a mountain of memories. □

This column is usually written by Kari Harrington, but this month we are departing from our regular routine. Kari has written the feature article this issue (see page 3), and in place of her normal column we are pleased to welcome two guest authors. Both young men have submitted articles to us expressing their points of view on issues of interest to them. Kari will return as regular columnist in December.

Finding the Right Class

BRYAN LAMONT



time, normal schools were afraid to take handicapped people with their special needs, but the teachers did help me to understand I have a future ahead.

I have been going to high school for the last two years now, and I have learned a lot, but I find high school would come more easily for me, if I had gone to a normal school for all my education.

Four years ago I started to write songs. I enjoy turning my thoughts and feelings into words, and I think it shows others what I can accomplish. I want to do something with my songs; it has been my dream for a long time. Some people wrote music for some of my songs. They said my songs are good and they think I should do something with them. □

This section of
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Ontario District.

Editor's Note:

Bryan would be glad to hear from any readers who want to write to him. This is his address, Bryan Lamont, 539-10th Avenue, Hanover, Ontario, Canada N4N 1R3.



ANIMATIONS OF THE MIND

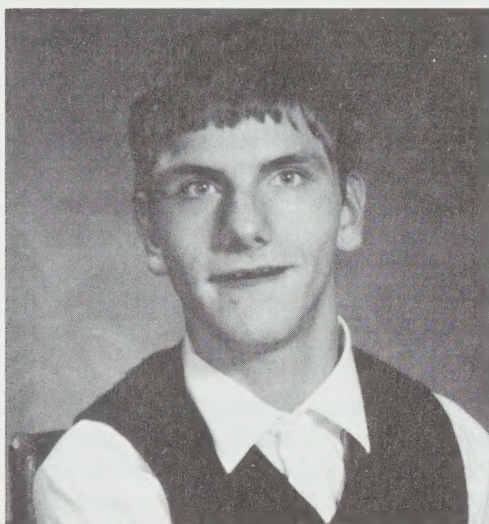
My name is Bryan Lamont. I am twenty-five years old. I have cerebral palsy. I have had my handicap since birth, but I didn't let this prevent me from doing things; I like to look at it as a small problem for me. I live at home with my mother, in a small town. I went to school in a special class for slow learners for twelve years. I did find that this time was long and boring. I know I could have learned more things. They didn't give me work that I could learn; they gave me work I was bored with, because they didn't know I could learn more than what they taught me. My family thought that my school was not right for me, because I was able to learn more. My mother and my family wanted to place me in a normal school. My mother didn't have any choice but to place me in a special class with slow learners. At that

The Biennial Conference of the International Society for Alternative and Augmentative Communication (ISAAC) will be held at the Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, California on October 23-26, 1988. The conference features national and international speakers on a broad range of topics, including the application of the latest technology for the nonspeaking person, teaching interaction strategies, using augmentative systems for employment settings, and consumer-user presentations. The conference will also offer numerous opportunities for researchers, clinicians, system users, and educators to meet at informal round table discussions and to visit the state-of-the-art exhibits. The ambience of the Disneyland Hotel and all of sunny Southern California will contribute to make the ISAAC Conference, "Animations of the Mind", an exciting personal and professional experience.

For information or registration materials, contact Frank DeRuyter, Ph.D., 1988 Conference Program Chair, Communication Disorders Department, Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center, 7601 East Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242.

Journey Out of Silence — A Review

RICHARD EMERY SIPOS



Richard Sipos is a twenty-one-year-old student at Scarborough campus of the University of Toronto. He has completed one course in each of English and French and hopes eventually to become a translator and possibly to do some writing. Prior to university he attended Francis Libermann High School in Scarborough and Sunnyview Public School.

Last year, William Rush visited Toronto and spoke with a group of disabled young people at the ESCI Resource Centre (Communicating Together Vol.6, No.1, March 1988). Although Mr. Sipos was unable to attend that session, he subsequently read Journey Out of Silence by Mr. Rush and submitted this review of the book.

Journey Out of Silence is a refreshing change from many of the books written about or by the disabled. It neither shames its subject nor puts the face of being disabled on a pedestal. Rather, it is an account of a normal individual with a unique problem and the way he deals with this as he draws nearer to maturity. Mr. Rush alternates between advancement and minor set backs as we all do.

Although he describes a period of time from the early sixties to the early eighties, a disabled student like myself, who began his education a mere ten years later, can notice major differences. Mr. Rush was, in some ways, ahead of his time. His era was that of the slow realiza-

tion of the mental competency of individuals robbed of certain physical abilities.

From this autobiography we learn that if children such as Mr. Rush were educated at all, it was in segregated elementary schools. In some way he benefited from this arrangement. Once the staff at J.P. Lord School had identified the youngster's intelligence, he was stimulated and encouraged to build on his natural talent.

Moreover, when the time came for him to continue his education beyond the elementary boundaries of J.P. Lord, the institution made special arrangements. A high school class was created where each special student was assigned work which was appropriate to his interests and talent. A special teacher then worked individually with the student.

I believe, for Mr. Rush, this system was helpful in two ways. First the small student/teacher ratio enabled his instructor to truly explore and appreciate his mental faculties. Then, the eager student could receive an enriched education which included frank discussions of his writing skills on a level which would have been impractical in a "normal" high school.

It is not hard for me to appreciate the immense addition that writing made to Mr. Rush's life. As he himself indicates, the development of an agile mind is not complete unless two way communication is established. The typewriter and headstick are amazing tools for transmitting precise thoughts and emotions. Moreover, Mr. Rush shows how, with these tools, seemingly helpless persons can become productive individuals.

Mr. Rush's account also makes the detrimental aspects of a segregated education all too apparent. The young teen, sheltered for most of his life, was over-anxious when the opportunity to integrate socially presented itself. He candidly reveals his early mistakes in this area. Twice he allowed emotions to interfere with natural friendships. One may attribute this to his eagerness to have the person see beyond his disability. What it in fact did was frighten potential friends away.

More importantly, however, what emerges at the end of the book is a

well rounded university graduate, able to make choices and accept criticism from self and others, who just happens to be unable to walk or speak!□

Editor's Note:

Journey Out of Silence by William L. Rush. Published by Media Productions and Marketing, 2440 "O" Street, #202, Lincoln, Nebraska 68510. Price \$14.95 US funds. It is available in Canada from the Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3N2. Price \$19.00 Cdn funds plus shipping and handling.

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Adaptive Play Enhances Communication

CHRISTIANE CHARLEBOIS-MAROIS

Christiane Charlebois-Marois is an occupational therapist who worked for a number of years with children with cerebral palsy at the Victor-Doré School in Montreal. In 1980 she travelled extensively, visiting hospitals, schools and centres, gathering information on seating, mobility and communication aids for children. She has written a book, Everybody's Technology, a sharing of augmentative communication ideas. In the following article she focuses on the important role of play in encouraging communication.

When I first started working in augmentative communication with physically challenged nonspeaking children, my main concern was to provide them with a communication board and a means of indicating. I thought that, with these tools, the children would automatically start to communicate. But it was not that easy! Gradually, I realized that these children had few opportunities to develop their inner language and that they were lacking more than just the physical ability to speak.

Language development is *one* aspect (and an important one) of the normal development of children; others are motor skills, cognitive skills and social skills. In able-bodied children, these skills develop naturally during the first years of life through everyday interaction with objects, toys, peers and adults — in different situations. A child who has been deprived for years of most of these experiences because of severe motor impairment will not fully develop the prerequisites for language. In this article, I will discuss a few of these prerequisite skills and share some ideas on ways in which the environment and play of physically challenged children can be adapted to encourage the development of these prerequisites.

Exploring the Environment

Babies first start to explore their world visually, so in their first months we naturally provide them with appropriate seating (feeding seats, car seats) to compensate their lack of motor control. Good seating is even more essential for children with physical disabilities. It is crucial to their development and should be considered before any other action is taken.

After a few months, able-bodied children can move independently and explore their natural environment further. A new world is opening up! Disabled children, too, need the same opportunity to move around, choose where to go and maybe even make things untidy! This will lead to a variety of new stimulations and interactions.

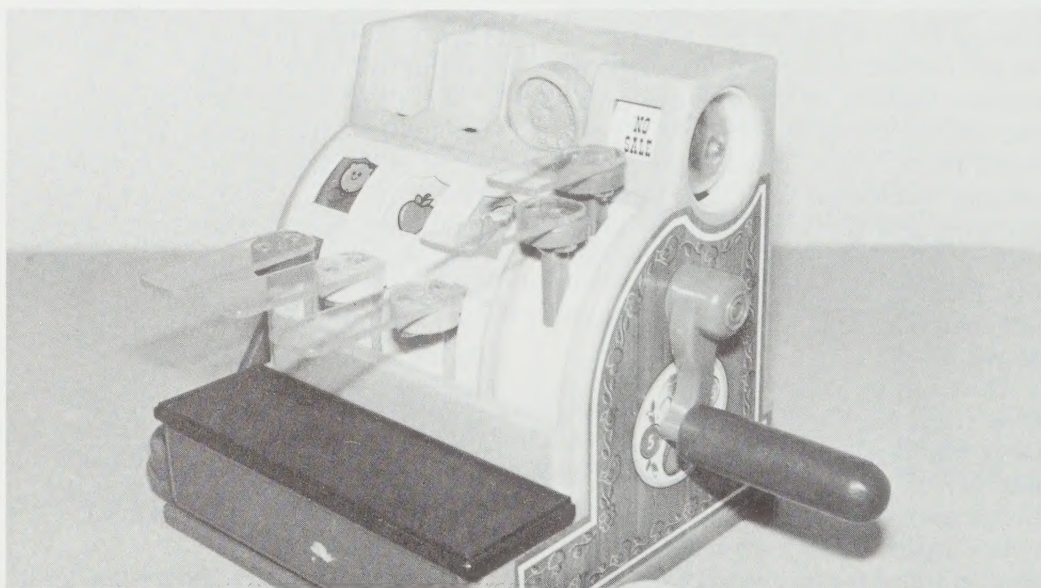
To help in this exploration, several mobility aids may be considered. For young ones who can crawl, scooter boards can be made or purchased; some can even be motorized (Steven Kanor). Later on, mobility in a low, seated position (motorized caster carts or electric play vehicles) provides the children with the freedom to reach higher objects while keeping them at the level of their peers, thus facilitating social interaction. If a child is able to stand, standing mobility aids can be considered for special activities when friends are upright. The next step would probably be to a

motorized wheelchair. The importance of independent mobility cannot be over-emphasized. It is a major breakthrough that will influence all areas of development. With the technology now available, it is almost impossible *not* to find a motorized wheelchair control to suit the abilities of even quite severely disabled people (joystick, global arm movement, knee and head controls, touch plates, single switches with scanners).

Outside exploration offers more stimulation. Playing with water, sand, grass, leaves — in fields and woods, with flowers or snow, are common experiences for children, but all too often they are not offered to children who are physically challenged. When the possibility of playing and exploring outside is limited, adapted playgrounds may be considered to create backgrounds for imaginary games. They could include areas which simulate woods, a jungle, caves — places rarely accessible to those with a severe physical disability.

Interacting with Objects and Toys

Besides locomotor exploration, the investigatory exploration of objects is very important to normal development. Children learn skills by playing with toys. For children in their first year of life, we nor-



Enlarged levers on a toy cash register.

mally place toys where they are easy to see and reach whether they are suspended or placed in the baby's crib or playpen.

The same principles apply to children who experience problems with manipulation. Objects can be hung on activity frames (C. Musselwhite) or placed on a play table with raised edges to prevent the toys falling off. Velcro can be used for attaching toys to rugs or play surfaces covered by indoor-outdoor carpet (C. Goossens' and S. Crain). Magnets or velcro can also be sewn to mitts so that small metal objects or toys fitted with velcro will cling to the hands (C. Musselwhite). Fabric covered room dividers also offer great vertical play boards for attaching velcro-backed story characters.

To facilitate grasping, pull-toys can easily be adapted by making knots in the pull-cord or stringing cubes on it. Simple wooden puzzles usually come with knobs on each piece; wooden puzzles of higher cognitive level can be adapted with a handle by drilling a small hole into each piece and gluing in a wooden dowel.

Magnetic blocks (available commercially) can make construction games accessible to children with poor hand coordination.

One of the most important prerequisites for communication is the understanding that what I do or say can have a direct effect on my environment. If not, why should I try to communicate at all?

Reactive toys not only teach children causal relationships, but also give them a sense of competence

and power over their environment. Some reactive toys on the market already have knobs large enough to be manipulated by children with physical disabilities. Others may have to be adapted, often by simply enlarging the existing handles or levers (e.g. cash registers).

Battery-operated toys can be operated with a minimum of motor ability when they are fitted with larger switches. These toys provide a variety of visual and auditory stimuli. For some children, special positioning will be necessary to enhance their motor abilities. Battery-operated toys can also be used with children confined to static positions for long periods, such as when lying down or standing on prone boards (C. Musselwhite).

Many battery toys enhance more than one skill. Race tracks and electric trains are excellent for visual tracking and scanning. As Musselwhite points out, "The development of these skills is even more important for static children who rely on observation of environment to gain stimulation". Other abilities, however, can also be developed with train sets including object permanency, motor skills (switch), making choices, requesting action, symbolic play, interaction with peers.

More complex battery toys are now on the market, including robot arms, or trucks with remote control. They provide a variety of new play materials more suited to physically challenged youngsters with higher cognitive levels. Additional skills, such as spatial relation-

ship and planning activities, can be learned with these. Today, with an abundance of computer games, more and more skills can be learned through simulated actions on video screens.

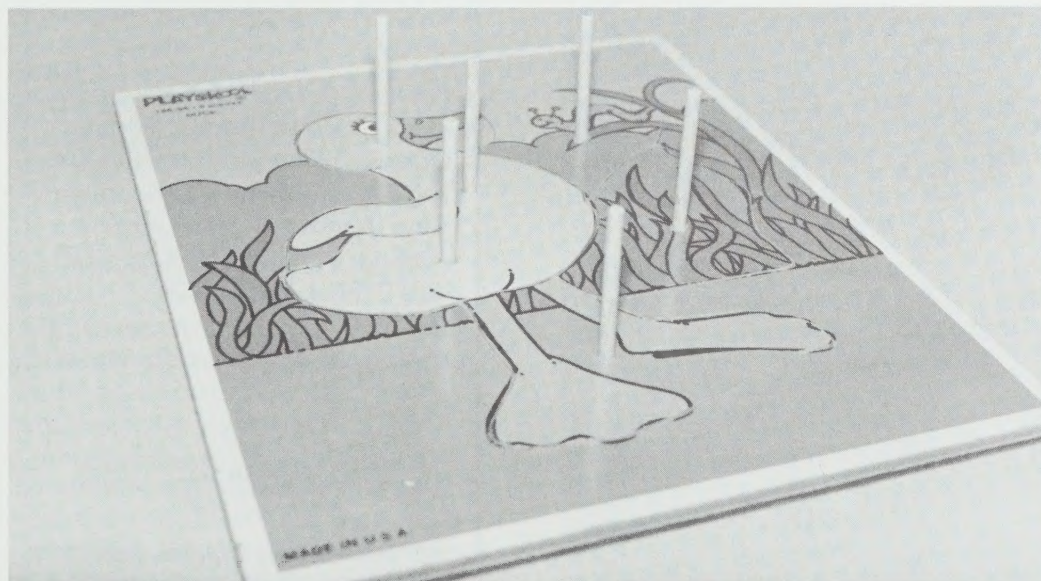
Books and story-telling play an important part in the life of a child. Pages of favourite books can be cut out and rearranged in photo albums with cardboard pages which are easier to turn. Another idea is to make "story kits" consisting of a book, a tape on which the story is recorded and puppets representing the major characters. While listening to the story, the disabled child and his peers or siblings can play out the different roles, providing more interaction. Joint activity is also a good opportunity to practise taking turns, an essential component in communication if we are to avoid having the nonspeaking child be a passive receiver. Children can create their own stories by pointing to characters, pieces of furniture or rooms in a doll's house, perhaps using light beam pointers to point to the objects directly. Adults or older friends then verbalize the story for the enjoyment of the rest of the group.

Puppets are also very useful toys. A puppet with a headstick can "talk" with a nonspeaking child, using his communication board and at the same time model the use of the headstick. Puppets can be mounted on sticks, moved by joysticks or adapted with handles to make manipulation easier, placing the world of symbolic play within reach of physically challenged children.

Learning to Make Choices

Learning to make choices is a prerequisite of prime importance for nonspeaking children who risk developing "learned helplessness", because, too often, everything is decided for them. By making choices, a child asserts his independence and gains control over his environment.

Meals are a time for interaction and pleasure but also a time to develop tastes and identify what foods are liked or disliked. All children should be given an opportunity to indicate some kind of preference. For example, "meal boards" can be introduced: presented like a menu, the food avail-



A puzzle with wooden dowel added to each piece.

able from which the child can choose is represented with pictures. In institutional settings, it may be more difficult to offer selections at mealtimes, but there should always be some kind of choice (for instance, two types of juice or fruit at snacktime). Nonspeaking individuals thus practise scanning and picture recognition at the same time. The same choices can obviously be given by presenting the actual food to the child, however, the use of a food picture board is a way to introduce a communication board gradually.

The same principle applies in any other activity. At playtime, photographs or pictures of toys (cut out from a store catalogue) can make a play communication board on which a child indicates the toys he wants. Card-playing is also a good activity for learning to make choices if the nonspeaking child himself indicates the cards he wishes to play. The same holds true for games involving dice: when possible, the way the dice are tossed should be adapted to the person with the physical disability, to allow his or her participation.

Enhancing Motor Abilities

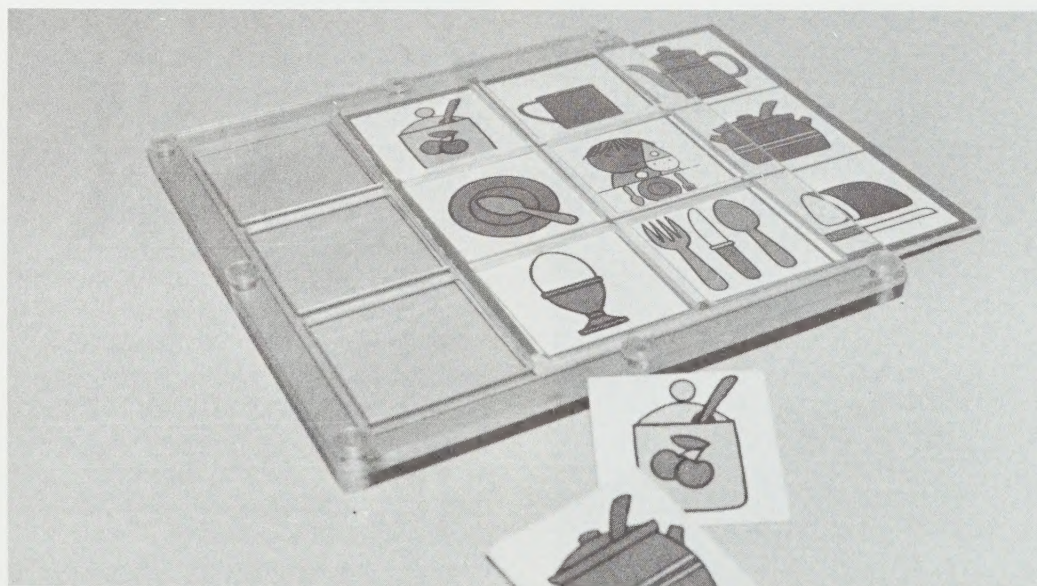
Communication for nonspeaking children or adults will almost always involve a motor component. So, by improving motor skills, we actually enhance communication skills.

Playing is an ideal way of working on difficult tasks. The therapist will have to select toys and games

that meet specific goals. Games where physically challenged children have to target in on a given point will be useful in improving pointing ability on a communication board. If children have to use special pointers (hand or head) to access their communication systems, the therapist can incorporate them in various games to improve the ability to point.

Headsticks can do a lot more than point to a communication board. They can be used for colour-matching donut shaped forms, or answering questions by pointing to the answer. Headsticks can be tipped with magnets to move little characters or playhouse pieces of furniture to which tiny metal pieces have been glued. Paint brushes or felt pens can be attached to headsticks for the artist in every child. Headsticks are perfect for playing music on a small electric organ or piano, or for a cooking class if a wooden spoon is attached. There is almost no limit to their therapeutic uses. For the children, they can open up a wide range of new experiences.

In conclusion, play is important for introducing a variety of skills that are prerequisites for communication. But, most importantly, **PLAY IS FUN** — for everyone! □



Lotto game with plexiglass frame to hold cards in place.

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PEAL SOFTWARE

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Beware Of These Clients; They Can Speak

SUSAN SANSONE



Sue Sansone is supervising speech pathologist at the Suffolk Association for the Help of Retarded Children (AHRC) in Bohemia, New York. She has been involved in the field of augmentative communication for over ten years, watching the growth of systems and technology. Now that many of her clients are using computers and synthetic speech, she has become aware of the responsibilities professionals have for seeing that augmentative communicators have the same opportunity to use their new "voices" as do speaking peers. To emphasize this point, Mrs. Sansone wrote the following article which was first published in the AHRC newspaper Lamplighter Volume 17, No. 4, December '87/January '88.. We felt this perspective was worth sharing with our readers, and reprint the article here with her permission.

As speech pathologists, we teach nonverbal clients to communicate with those around them. We painstakingly plan and construct communication boards to help them express their wants, needs, and feelings. We act as interpreters, sometimes patiently playing twenty questions to determine what a client means. It sometimes appears as if we need magical powers to aid us in understanding.

Now that several of our clients have acquired "talking computers", there seems to be developing more of a "communication gap" than ever before. Speech therapists, teachers, and parents are fast learning that the phrase "This is my talking computer" carries a double-edged sword.

As an individual who has spoken on behalf of our clients for many years, permit me to attempt to bridge this "communication gap" and speak for them once more. So if they could speak, this is what I believe they would want to say:

This Is My Talking Computer and for months before it arrived you impressed upon me how expensive it was — that I probably could never get another. Please understand why I became so agitated when anyone comes near it and won't let anyone but my speech therapist touch it — not even my teacher or mother who are trying to help find the right codes.

This Is My Talking Computer and I have never had a voice before. I really do understand that you want the volume turned down, but I LIKE BEING LOUD. I love to shout in the hallway and have everyone turn around and pay attention to me. I love it when people open the door to my classroom or the speech therapist's office and poke their head in and say, "What's going on here?"

This Is My Talking Computer and I have never been able to talk before. I LOVE TALKING. I love hearing the sound of my own voice and just like any young child learning to talk, I want to explore words and sounds. I want to practise my picture codes over and over and over so that I will be able to tell you my favourite things really fast. At first you were pleased that I was a "regular chatter box", but now you seemed to be getting annoyed.

This Is My Talking Computer and you told me I should always have it with me and use it ALL THE TIME. People who can speak seem to be able to talk whenever they want to, wherever they want to, so why can't I? Why does my instructor keep telling me to turn off my machine and talk later?

This Is My Talking Computer and

you told me that once I had it, people would be able to understand what I wanted. Well, I don't understand (now that they can understand me) why I'm still getting chicken even though I ask for pizza, or hamburgers and French fries.

This Is My Talking Computer and I like having funny things in it. Mom told you to put "You're a Fatty" in the machine because Dad and I always tease each other. I use the words all the time at home. I didn't know that my instructor would feel hurt when I called him a fatty. He told my speech therapist that it should be taken out of the machine. Why didn't he talk to me and tell me it hurt his feelings? I also have "I am sorry" in my machine.

This Is My Talking Computer and you told me to use it to express myself — not to throw things and bang things when I am angry. I am glad you put the words "I hate this" and "I hate you" in the computer when I asked for them. I really did hate you the day we argued and you chased me out of your office and I rammed my electric wheelchair into all your furniture. I don't understand why some people said you shouldn't put "hate" in the computer. People who can talk say whatever they want. It really helps to be able to get your angry feelings out in words.

This Is My Talking Computer and I think it is a wonderful machine. I know that you only wanted me to touch certain pictures and not touch the words, but I couldn't resist. I simply had to press every button on that machine. Then I "wiped out the computer" and it wouldn't talk and I quickly learned why I should not play with all the buttons.

And I will learn other things now that I can talk but it will take time.

I will learn to speak more quietly.

I will learn that even though people really understand, I can't always have what I want.

I will learn when to speak.

I will learn what is appropriate to say and to whom.

Please be patient.

Please learn to listen and to communicate with me. □

Blissymbols in an Integrated Setting

CLAUDIA WOOD

How can I use Blissymbols in my class if only one or two students need them to communicate? How do I modify my program to meet the needs of a minority of students? Questions of this nature are often asked by teachers in special and regular schools. Instructors from Australia have shared some of their ideas on the subject. Though the activities were used in a class of multiply disabled youngsters, primary teachers in regular schools will find them easy to adapt. They demonstrate how Blissymbols which are meaning based can be used to reinforce basic language concepts and enhance the communication skills of many children.

Keila Waksvik was an occupational therapist at the Harry Giese

Centre in Darwin, Australia, when she teamed up with primary teacher, Linda Meredith, to address the problems of two nonspeaking children in Linda's class. They collaborated on how to introduce Blissymbols to the nonspeaking children with the additional aim of using the symbols to enhance the language arts program of all the students.

One of their projects involved teaching the concepts "happy" and "sad". A slotted chart containing pictures of each student was placed near the door. Upon entering the class each day children were asked if they felt happy or sad. A Blissymbol representing the appropriate concept was placed next to each picture. When the chart was complete everyone read the "sentences" e.g. John is "happy", Mary is "sad", and modelled the appropriate facial expressions. Class discussions elicited reasons for individual emotions.

Teacher and therapist developed an original story, *The Happy Fish*, using words and embellished Blissymbols to review the concepts. They xeroxed a copy for each student to read and to take home to share with family and friends.

As a culminating activity, students helped plan and perform a puppet show for peers, teachers and parents which was based upon the book. Everyone had fun and shared in the teaching and learning experience. Similar activities throughout the year helped to familiarize all the students with the Blissymbols which served to support the communication program of the nonspeaking students.

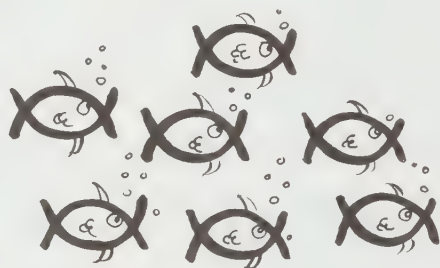
This excerpt from *The Happy Fish* may provide you with some ideas for creating your own stories using Blissymbols. If you do, why not share them with BCI? □

He swam up,



looking for his friends.

He found his friends



behind a big rock.

The fish was happy.



Editor's Note:

ESCI frequently has requests to publish teaching materials such as *The Happy Fish*. To estimate market interest before printing we would like to hear from any readers who would consider purchasing a book such as this. The selling price is anticipated to be about \$5.00. Write to *Communicating Together*, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada, M3C 3N2.

Communicating in Ontario



A NEWSLETTER FOR EDUCATORS ABOUT AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

Number 5 September 1988

A New Fall Look!

As you have noticed C.I.O. is sporting a new look! The enclosed letter explains all the details behind our new appearance. We hope you will find this offer an exciting way to obtain pertinent and current information.

As we share with you this year we hope you will reap plenty of practical information that you can use in your classroom. Keep in touch with us with your feedback, ideas and items. If we all exchange information, we can keep growing together!

What's inside?

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Look in the Book	Page 3
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ESCI Corner

World Wide Access!

Did you know that we can be in touch with people from all over the world to share information on augmentative communication?

How? Through the use of Confer, a telecommunication system. Once members are set up with their own computer and modem they can access Confer. They can seek assistance or brainstorm for solutions to problems, share new ideas, keep up to date with the most recent developments in the field, and also catch up on all the interesting tidbits that make the field of augmentative communication special. There are over 100 participants on Confer with people from the United Kingdom, USA, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, and Israel involved. They include professionals, disabled people, parents, and distributors of equipment.

Participants often learn about a new publication even before it has been to press! Professionals conducting research are frequent users. Imagine being able to hear about the most recent developments from all over the world!

Confer also gives members access to professionals developing tech-

nical aids. We've all had moments when we wished that we had the person who made a device right with us, so that we could "pick his or her brain" and solve our problems without waiting for a letter or having the hassles of a phone call.

Confer operates 24 hour a day and the convenience of telecommunications means that you can read your messages and other news items when it suits your schedule.

Confer is administered through ESCI and anyone wanting more information should contact Katherine Seybold (416) 421-8377. This is really an exciting way to stay informed!



Communicating In Ontario

is published four times during the school year and is available to educators, augmentative communicators and their families.

Published by the Educational Service Program within the Easter Seal Communication Institute

Editor: Sherri Parkins
Graphic Editor: Jonathan Cresswell-Jones
We welcome your letters, suggestions and items. Please submit to:

Editor, Communicating in Ontario
Easter Seal Communication Institute
24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario
M3C 3N2 • (416) 421-8377

Let your fingers do the talking!

Sign Language can be an important component within a nonspeaking student's system. Even though Sign Language may be used only for initiation or short exchanges it can have a very powerful role in communication.

The following skills should be considered when using sign:

- does the student have good range of motion?
- does he or she have some fine motor skill?
- is there good control over facial musculature?
- does he or she have good visual acuity and discrimination?
- is the student's cognitive development at object permanence level?

Sign Language has obvious advantages over some augmentative communication systems. It is portable, quick, never runs low on batteries. It doesn't break down or become misplaced. Interactions can be spontaneous without the need to set up or find a communication display.

Contrary to many fears, Sign Language does not appear to impede the development of speech, in fact many studies have found the opposite to be true. Some individuals develop or improve their speech after Sign Language is introduced.

Sign Language is often mistaken for a universal language. Signs are not the same from country to country. In fact, signs in Canada can be different from one geographic region to the next. Sometimes signs are different between cities, ages, or social groups.

Consider the use of Sign Language for the following situations:

- Requesting the washroom
- Requesting classroom activities
- Responding to social greetings and inquiries (eg. "How are you?")
- Seeking assistance
- Stating a physical condition or feeling

With a vocabulary of just a few signs a student can quickly influence his or her environment.

Sign Language does not mean that other augmentative communication techniques cannot be used. Combining techniques can effectively increase your student's power of communication. □

Student Profile



In response to our survey, we are introducing Student Profiles, a section of C.I.O. where you can share your experiences with your colleagues about augmentative communicators in your classrooms. As a result of this addition to C.I.O., we are giving you a homework assignment ! If we hear from just the people that suggested this in the survey, we will have enough profiles to keep us all learning from your experiences for a couple of years ! Now is the time for individuals from outside of Toronto to share with all of us! We know you're out there!

The following is an outline of the information that we need so that we can get a "feel" for your student.

Age: This is an easy one to answer!

Educational Program: Is your student in a special class? Is he or she integrated full or part time or receiving

resource room support? Do you have a classroom assistant? This section will help us understand the type of academic setting your student is in.

Medical/Cognitive Diagnosis:

This section will help us to understand your student's level of functioning. Is there a physical disability? How does it affect mobility? Is the student cognitively impaired?

Communication Methods: This area should include ALL forms of augmentative communication which the student uses. Does he or she use a communication display folder? How are words or phrases represented? Is a graphic system used? Does the student use any "light tech" such as a call bell or loop tape? Is "high tech" a part of their system as well ? Is a computer, voice communication output system used ? Is sign language or gesture used to supplement any of the above?

Classroom/Curriculum adaptations: Share an activity or subject that your augmentative communicator is enjoying. How did you adapt the activity so that all your students benefit and interact with the augmentative communicator? Do you use peer tutoring or a buddying system in your setting?

General comments: This category is for you to add anything you would like to share with the other readers of C.I.O. about your successes or frustrations!

Okay! You now have your assignments. We hope to hear from you soon! Submit your profiles to:
Editor, *Communicating in Ontario*
Easter Seal Communication Institute
24 Ferrand Drive
Don Mills, Ontario
M3C 3N2 □

TECHNOLOGY SHARING TECHNOLOGY SHARING

Key Board Access

Computers can sometimes appear to have built-in barriers. Some students that we know cannot access the computer programs through the "normal" keyboard due to intellectual and/or physical disabilities. One solution to this problem lies in the use of alternative keyboards.

What are *alternative keyboards*?

Alternative keyboards replace the standard keyboard and can be finely tuned to the individual's needs.

Expanded keyboard

Some alternative keyboards are called *expanded* and are large size keyboards that allow the user to locate and access keys on a much bigger surface than usual. Students who have poor fine motor skills can sometimes benefit from expanded keyboards.

Mini keyboard

Other alternative keyboards are called *mini* keyboards and are small versions of a standard keyboard. This type of keyboard can be used by students with limited strength or range of motion.

Unicorn keyboard

The *Unicorn* keyboard is a versatile expanded keyboard that allows a student to access the computer even though he or she may not be able to read. The keyboard can have individual overlays constructed using any pictorial representation that the student understands. The size of the "keys" may also be adapted to the student's individual needs. The whole keyboard can be programmed into two messages such as "return" and "right arrow". For the more advanced student, all 128 individual keys can be activated each with a separate letter,

word or symbol. Photographs, pictures of the computer program that is used, or hand drawings could be incorporated in to the display.

Examples of software that can be used on the Unicorn Keyboard include word processing programs such as Magic Slate and Bank Street Writer (Sunburst Software). Word processing programs may also be used by nonreaders so that they can be involved in sending messages home to parents, writing cards or making posters. Sticky Bear Opposites (Optimum Resource Inc.) is an example of another type of program that can be used. Many public domain software programs can also be used with the Unicorn keyboard. Adaptations to the Unicorn are only limited by our imagination and time! □

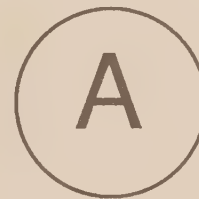
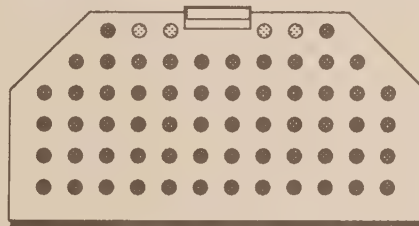
Look in the Book!

The Visual Language Cookbook by Gayle Joyce and Laurene Gallimore.

Joyce Media Inc., Northridge California, 91328.

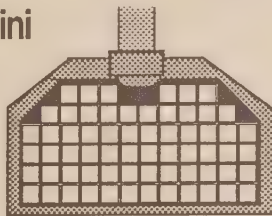
This book presents a variety of recipes in a fashion that makes them easily understood by students with low reading levels. Meat dishes, desserts, punches, breads, salads, and vegetable dishes are all included to encourage a well balanced meal plan. The use of photographs, line drawings, and Sign Language helps students read the recipes independently. Ingredients and utensils are presented via a photograph. The step by step technique is well illustrated in a logical manner with clear pictorial directions. □

Expanded



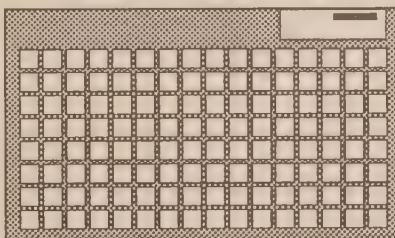
Key –
Actual size

Mini

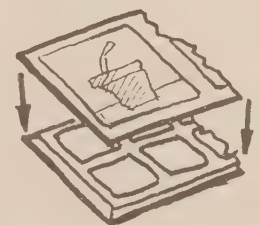


Keys –
Actual size

Unicorn



Key Area –
Actual Size



Overlay Technique

Alternative Keyboards: Expanded, Mini, and Unicorn



Be sure to see page 22 of Communicating Together for more conferences, sign language courses, interest courses, etc.

ESCI Orientations and Workshops

**Orientation to ESCI Services
2nd Tuesday of the month
1:30 to 3:30 PM**

**Orientations to Graphics
3rd Tuesday of the month
1:30 to 3:30 PM**

**Attention Educators of Cognitively Impaired Students!
Set aside Nov. 10 & 11, 1988.**

ESCI is offering a practical workshop that will focus on curriculum adaptations and strategies for enhancing the various modes of augmentative communication for cognitively impaired students. Opportunity will be given to educators who have registered to give input on the content of the workshop. This is an unique agenda, with *your* topics, to meet *your* needs.

**Contact Cindy Stall (416) 421-8377
to register for the above events at
ESCI.**

Catch Every Chance - Celebrate Every Child

**Council For Exceptional Children
32nd Annual Conference
Nov. 2 - 5, 1988.**

Holiday Inn, City Centre
Contact for info: Jim Potts
London Board of Education
1250 Dundas Street
London Ontario
W5W 5P2

**Program Planning: Treatment of the Severely Handicapped Child and Adolescent
September 22nd, 1988.**

Kingston, Ontario.
Presented by **Sarah Forsyth**
Ongwanada Kinsmen Rehabilitation Centre
To register, contact:
Valerie Buchan
Ongwanada
117 Park Street, Kingston, Ontario K7L 4L7
(613) 548-4417

Information Exchange

Looking for a place to exchange information on cause/effect, attention, imitation, picture identification, matching, socialization, augmentative communication, and concepts?
Contact:

Applied Technology
Speech and Hearing Service
Huron Regional Centre
P.O.Box 1000, Orillia, Ontario L3V 6L2
They'd like to share with you!

**Canadian Association for Music Therapy
16th Annual conference
April 27 - 29, 1989**

Skyline Hotel
Ottawa, Ontario.
For more information contact:
Bill Shugar, Conference Chairman
124 Craig Henry Drive, Nepean, Ontario K2G 4J1

Call for papers- Anyone wishing to present at the 1989 conference please direct your proposal to the conference chairman providing as many details as possible. Deadline for submissions is October 15, 1988. Contributions to a slide presentation of people engaging in music activity can also be submitted to the same above address.

A Blissymbol Game - Matching Pairs

Here is another activity for use in a classroom in which a Blissymbol user has been integrated. It will help students match concepts, and at the same time provide all students with an opportunity to learn about their classmate's communication system. The following activity demonstrates several ways in which concepts can be represented and their relationships better understood through Blissymbols. Find the symbols which belong together.

Ideas We Associate Together		Opposites	
1. spoon	grass	1. sweet	sad
2. king	sky	2. black	sour
3. man	queen	3. happy	low
4. green	mitts	4. high	day
5. blue	woman	5. night	get, receive
6. hat	drink	6. come	white
7. eat	fork	7. give	go
Blissymbolics is a meaning-based, augmentative communication system that stimulates both communication and cognitive development. It can be used by persons of many ages and cognitive levels, offering a large vocabulary and opportunities to apply features of the system as communication strategies. Blissymbolics can be used independently, with a variety of picture systems and technologies, as a complement to words and spelling and as a bridge to reading. Blissymbols used herein are derived from the symbols described in the work <i>Semantography</i>, original copyright © C.K. Bliss, 1949. September 1982, C.K. Bliss granted an exclusive, non-cancellable and perpetual, world-wide license to the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, to provide standards for the application of Blissymbols, for use by handicapped persons and persons having communication, language and learning difficulties. In 1987, the Institute was renamed Blissymbolics Communication International and became a division of the Easter Seal Communication Institute. The symbol composition and drawings appearing in articles are in accordance with <i>Blissymbols for Use</i>, compiled and edited by Barbara Hehner, and published by the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, Toronto, 1980.		Answers 1. spoon/fork 2. king/queen 3. man/woman 4. green/grass 5. blue/sky 6. hat/mitts 7. give/get, receive Ideas We Associate Together Opposites	

CATHY FAIRLEY

The Paraphrase is written for those who are moving into traditional orthography. It offers an independent reading opportunity for the growing reader. The Paraphrase is written by Cathy Fairley, former consultant, Easter Seal Communication Institute.

Speaking for Myself

I was in the hospital twelve years ago. My mom and dad did all the talking for me. This February I was in the hospital again.

This time my leg hurt. I had to go to the hospital for tests. They found a blood clot in my leg. I had to stay for ten days.

My mom and dad weren't with me this time. It was my chance to try to speak for myself. The doctors and nurses were great. I used my symbol board to talk to them. I asked them questions. I told them when things went wrong. They took time to see what I wanted to say.

The tests and needles hurt a lot. But everyone was nice and tried to help. I had lots of visitors. That helped a lot too.

In the hospital I had to speak for myself. I found out that I could do it.

To Readers of Paraphrase

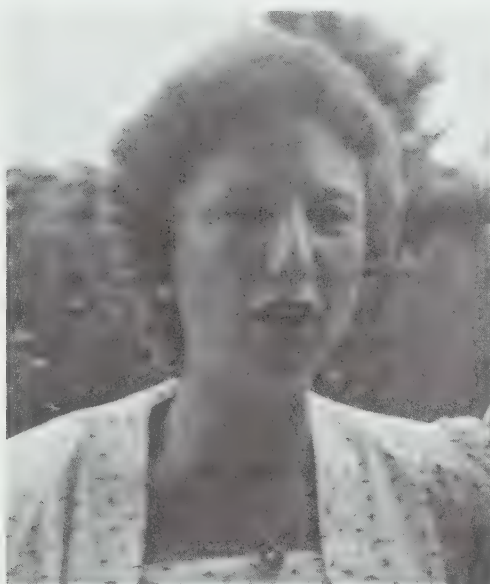
Kari's original article appeared in the last issue of *Communicating Together* Vol. 6, No. 2, June 1988. □



Kari Speaks for herself.

International Collaboration: SYNREL Comes to Israel

JUDY SELIGMAN-WINE



Judy Seligman-Wine, a speech pathologist, was a member of the original team at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre which adapted Blissymbols for use by nonspeaking populations. In 1974 she emigrated to Israel where she teaches Blissymbol workshops and has set up augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) programs throughout the country. She is a member of the International Blissymbol Panel, chairperson of the Society for the Development of Blissymbolics in Israel and Chairperson of the ISAAC Standing Committee on Developing Countries.

Several years ago, Malcolm Hind, a lecturer in computing at the Edge Hill College of Higher Education in Ormskirk, England, had the opportunity of observing several children communicating with Blissymbols in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was struck by the fact that the children, while communicating effectively with Blissymbols, were experiencing difficulty in sequencing symbols to produce properly defined English sentences. This observation signified the beginning of Malcolm's relationship with the Blissymbol community and served as the cata-

lyst for the development of the SYNREL series of programs for teaching syntactic relationships to Blissymbol users using the BBC microcomputer (a product of the British Broadcasting Corporation). The series consists of seventeen programs: seven for use with a concept keyboard, five for single switch use and five for double switch use. The title SYNREL stands for Syntactic Relationships. The purpose of the programs is two-fold: to aid the person communicating with Blissymbols to learn and understand the proper sequencing of symbols in order to facilitate communication, and to provide preparatory training for using Blissymbols on the computer for written output. The series utilizes the standard colour coding of Blissymbols which is based on the Fitzgerald key — yellow for people, green for verbs, orange for objects, blue for adjectives and white for prepositions. The symbols will only appear on the monitor if the user has accessed them in the proper order. The series for the concept keyboard includes programs for sequencing subject-verb, subject-verb-object, preposition-object and object-preposition-object. There are two versions for each of the programs (other than for the preposition-object program), one in which the user must first access the proper colour and then the symbol (i.e. the colour square yellow, the symbol father, colour square green, symbol to eat) and the other in which the colour is included with the symbol itself. The programs for single and double switch are identical to one another, allowing for subject-verb, subject-verb-object, preposition-noun, noun-preposition-noun and adjective-noun sequencing. They differ from one another only in the method of accessing. The symbols are produced on the monitor in two variations, one with full background colour and the other with a coloured border. There is an option for printed output. The programs are attractively presented and are easily used. It should be stressed that SYNREL was not developed as a communication pro-

gram but rather as a teaching tool to facilitate communication. Funds for the development of the single and double switch programs were provided by the British Spastics Society. These programs are now undergoing trial runs within the British school system as part of the funding agreement.

SYNREL for Hebrew Speaking People

The very first of the SYNREL series (subject-verb using the concept keyboard) was demonstrated at the European Blissymbol meeting held in Holland in April, 1985. I was very impressed by the program and requested a copy for reference purposes. At that time, few people working in Israel in the field of augmentative and alternative communication had access to a BBC computer and in any case the program would have to be adapted for use with Hebrew speaking populations. After several letters which crossed in the mail and a number of telephone calls, Malcolm Hind and I succeeded in making contact and he put forth his most incredible offer of adapting the SYNREL program to correspond to written Hebrew. While I tried to convince him of the difficulties inherent in the task, he stood firm — and thus began a most productive and meaningful relationship, not only in terms of the materials produced but also in terms of the personal contact with a very special, human individual.

The adaptation of the SYNREL for Hebrew speaking populations involved the transposing of the screen to read from right-to-left and then the reversing of the symbol sequences to correspond to the Hebrew direction. This required the re-drawing of many of the symbols and demanded many hours of slow,

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laborious and painstaking work. The first program arrived in Israel by mail. First the symbols were checked for accuracy by the Israeli Blissymbol monitors and then the program was tried with several children. The children were asked to tell a story about a given picture using the subject-verb program. They enjoyed using their Blissymbols in this way, and were particularly pleased with the clear, colourful graphic representation on the screen. Full details of our successes were conveyed to Malcolm; likely because of this he volunteered to devote his own personal time to the continued adaptation of the SYNREL series into Hebrew.

Malcolm had the opportunity of meeting with some of the Israelis working with both Blissymbols and SYNREL at the ISAAC International Conference in Cardiff, Wales in September 1986. It was a very emotional meeting on both sides, and at least from our point of view, we came away feeling that we had made a very dear friend. At that time, Malcolm presented us with several more of the programs for the concept keyboard. These were followed by several single and double switch programs which arrived in the mail some time later. All of these programs maintained the high level of accuracy of symbols and attractive presentation and proved to be effective additions to our repertoire of software for Blissymbol users.

Developer Meets Users in Israel

We recognized the importance of Malcolm's work as well as the demands on his time which this work entailed and decided to invite him to Israel as a guest of the Israel Blissymbol Society. The purpose of Malcolm's visit was two-fold: to enable him to work with us in further developing and applying his program and to allow him to experience for himself the clinical application of his work. Malcolm visited Israel, accompanied by his wife, in October, 1987 for a ten-day period. During his visit he gave several lectures in which he explained the principles and philosophy of SYNREL and demonstrated the software. He also visited centres in different parts of the country where children and adults who com-

municate with Blissymbols have begun using the SYNREL programs. These included populations of preschoolers, elementary-school-aged and teenaged children and head-injured veterans. Malcolm was interested to see the many diversified and creative ways in which his programs were being applied and was moved by the response of the users.

In all, Malcolm's visit was a great success, both for him and those in Israel working with SYNREL. His visit gave us greater insights into the various applications of the programs and we enjoyed his constructive comments regarding our work with the users themselves. We know from Malcolm's various reactions throughout his visit that the experience was an important and meaningful one for him. It provided him with the opportunity of seeing Blissymbol users in a different culture and language environment reaping benefit from his work. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Malcolm Hind for all his efforts on our behalf. The invitation to visit Israel was only a small token in comparison to the multitude of hours which he devoted to preparing SYNREL for use in Israel and we hope our hospitality and enthusiasm served to further express our gratitude. It is our hope that this example of international coopera-

tion can serve as a model for others, both in the use of SYNREL and in the application of augmentative communication throughout the world. □

Editor's Note:

Further information on SYNREL may be obtained by writing: Mr. Michael Hind, Head of Computer Education, Edge Hill College of Higher Education, St. Helens Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L3P 4QP, England.

Welcome Communicating in Ontario Readers

For the past year ESCI has been publishing a quarterly newsletter *Communicating in Ontario* for Ontario educators, augmentative communicators and their families.

This year *Communicating in Ontario* will be amalgamated with *Communicating Together*, and inserted as a supplement to all Ontario subscribers of this magazine.

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Communication Books — An Aid to Community Integration

RENEE PROCHASKA

Renee Prochaska is program coordinator for a community-based group home facility for severely handicapped adults in Overland Park, Kansas. She has a Masters degree in Special Education from the University of Kansas and has been a special education teacher, for several years, of both trainable mentally handicapped and severely multiply handicapped students. While teaching this latter group whose physical handicaps were minimal but who were unable to speak and who exhibited inappropriate behaviour, Ms. Prochaska began constructing a variety of communication boards and using them to encourage the integration of the students into the community.

Community integration should be one of the main goals for students of a secondary school level multiply handicapped classroom. It will assist them in their transition from school to adult life. The more familiar the public becomes with severely handicapped students as individuals, the more likely they are to encourage group homes in the community and to consider hiring these individuals and others like them.

The use of communication books with nonspeaking individuals can be helpful in the integration process. Since most members of society, and quite often staff in facilities for the severely handicapped, do not know sign language, teaching these students to communicate totally by signing creates for them a life of isolation and of dependence on the few in their environment who do sign. However, a communication book with line drawings or photos is easily understood by both non-handicapped and less severely handicapped peers alike. These books are also quite portable.

Communication books have a definite place on job sites for my students in both sheltered work-

shops and community work placements where one must ask for more materials, for assistance, or for a break-time. Often individuals with communication books can get jobs for which they might not otherwise be accepted because of their inability to communicate.

Community Experiences

A restaurant offers one of the most motivating, social places in which to communicate with a book. Three students in my former classroom used augmented communication systems, and with practice, each one learned to place his or her order using slightly different systems. Brad had a communication book consisting totally of photographs, magazine pictures, fotostick pictures, and food labels. Each picture represented a phrase, concept, or complete thought and had words to represent this written under each. The pictures were grouped into categories of: activities he liked to do, questions he commonly asked, significant people in his environment, and food. The food section was in the back of the book and quickly accessed using a tongue depressor "index" tab. This section was further organized into sections: snack foods, breakfast, lunch, McDonald's restaurant entrees (his favourite place), dinner and dessert foods.

Charlene's book was set up on a colour-coded, modified Fitzgerald key with line drawing symbols and photographs for the pictures of people in her life. As her vocabulary expanded, additional flaps were added to accommodate the new categories, or to supplement existing categories.

Dawn, whose receptive skills appeared to be much lower than the others, had a combination object/picture book. This book consisted of six basic conceptual photographs with a miniature or "part of" the actual object attached beside the picture. For example, a set of earphones (which no longer worked) was used to denote a radio earphone headset, and half of an actual plastic glass was used to

indicate a request for a drink. It appeared that adding a food section with pictures of various entrees to this system would be too much for her scan. Therefore, I compiled a picture card file containing pictures of entrees from various restaurants which Dawn used when placing her orders. I would give Dawn a choice of three food entrees served at that particular restaurant, and ask her "What do you want?", pointing to each picture as I named it. Once she made her food selection, I would do the same procedure for her drink. When the waitress came, Dawn would hand her the chosen food and drink card to place her order.

Placing Orders Independently

My goal was to enable each student to place his or her order independently without the waitress needing to refer to me or to ask me anything for clarification. I wanted her to interact directly with my students. I helped to facilitate this by building details or answers to commonly asked questions into each student's communication system. With Dawn's picture cards, I had each card laminated, then added a strip of adhesive tape on which I wrote, with a marker, the details of what the picture represented. For example, on the picture of a package of french fries, I wrote "large fries" (as Dawn always wanted a large amount of fries). On a hamburger picture, I wrote "Quarter Pounder with onion and mustard" (which is how Dawn likes this). For the other students, I added to their books words such as "yes", "no", "ketchup", "mustard", "large", "small". Then, when the waitress asked them "What size Coke do you want, large or small?", they could make the choice.

I found that the most effective way to teach these students to place their orders was by modelling the process, using the books to place my own order.

During this training experience, I made several observations. First I noted that Brad was just as con-

cerned about the condiments to be added to his food, as the food itself. Sometimes he started by pointing to butter or jelly and then pointed to the toast. He always pointed to sugar when he ordered coffee. Charlene, exercising her right as a woman to change her mind, often told me she wanted one thing before the waitress came and then would order, with great conviction, something completely different when the waitress actually asked her.

Through the use of their books, these students learned to communicate clearly what they wanted. They were finally able to choose their own meal, after a lifetime of having mom or dad order for them.

Community Response

The community response to my students using their communication

books was excellent. The waitresses soon treated them as their favourite regulars. Waitresses would call each by name, ask *them* if everything was OK and occasionally if time permitted, sit in the booths and talk with them. If, during my nonworking hours, I went into one of the restaurants that we frequented, the staff always asked about my students. Many staff were so impressed with the students' ability to use their books, that they told their family and other employees about them. And need I say my students loved the power of ordering with their communication systems and began to ask to go to certain restaurants quite frequently! □

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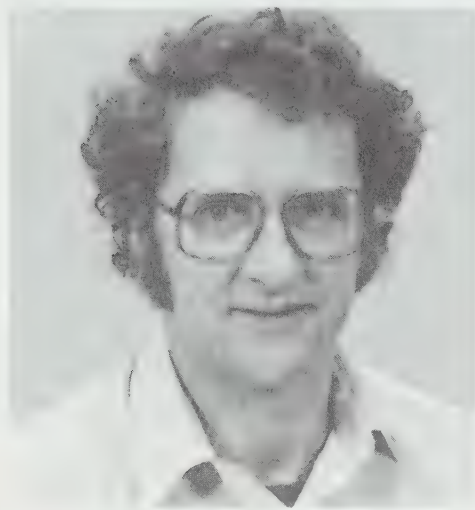


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Creative Arts: A Contribution to Wholistic Service

GEB VERBURG



"Research and Publications" is written by Geb Verburg, who has been involved in the field of nonspeech communication since the mid-seventies. A cognitive scientist, Mr. Verburg is currently working as a research associate in several projects at the Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre, Toronto.

This article is about creative arts communication and rehabilitation, but first I must touch briefly upon a philosophical issue that affects wholistic service. As a practical antidote to this philosophizing, I will be reviewing a book on creative arts.

In the April/May issue of the *Hastings Centre Report*, Strachan Donnelley, director of education of the Hastings Centre, asserts that medical ethics "hovers over a philosophical abyss". This abyss is our conception of the human self. Donnelley uses the word abyss to emphasize how little we know and understand about the human self, or "soul" as he refers to it occasionally.

What has this to do with creative arts, communication, or rehabilitation? Very much indeed, if you realize that rehabilitation professionals provide a service or treat other human selves. The service that is provided is crucially determined by one's conception of what

human selves are or ought to be, and this conception then influences how treatment is administered.

Rehabilitation tends to focus heavily upon physical function, individual autonomy, and upon devices and technologies that enhance this autonomous functioning. This emphasis on the body is necessary, but it is not the whole picture. Professionals who allow their conception of the human self to be limited to the body or the physical (dys)functions of a client will provide a different, and I believe a less complete, service than professionals who see the client as a dynamically active person who relates to others and is integrated in a world of family, friends and others. In a liberal rephrasing of Donnelley I would say that the human self consists of (1) a body — with or without adaptive devices, (2) a mind and a personality with or without support systems, and (3) a corner of the world with family, friends and others. That is my conception of the human self and as such defines for me what wholistic service ought to be.

Accentuating the Positive

Again, how does this tie in to creative arts? I had not thought about it until I read *Accentuate the Positive! Expressive Arts for Children with Disabilities* by Fran Herman and Jim Smith. Mrs. Herman is the director of the Creative Arts Department at the Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre in Toronto and Mr. Smith was an instructor in the program for several years. Flipping through the book I first saw what I expected to see; creative arts taught creatively. What struck me, however, were the many sections in which the authors describe children, their traumas, anxieties, disappointments and hopes, and effortlessly and elegantly move into psycho-therapeutic remediation as an integral part of a creative arts class or event.

The descriptions of the children's problems sound totally authentic; showing an extremely acute sense of what matters to the children and

a great sensitivity on the part of the authors. The therapeutic interventions range from common methods (e.g. role play, expressive activities) to the kind of joyful group activities in which every reader would love to play a part. I am very impressed by the therapeutic potential brought forward throughout the book. However, it is not just a music or art therapy manual.

I find it difficult to classify this publication. It is as much a curriculum resource as a creative arts guide. Its emphasis on the emotional development of children who are disabled in a classroom activity-based context makes it quite unique and extremely useful. Finally the book reads like a journal and is in some ways just that. It is well organized, has clear headings, explicit objectives, and instructions for the many activities described in detail. The book selling for \$18.95, (Canadian) contains 226 pages with many great pictures, original music (score and text) and an overwhelming number of activities and arts ideas.

Chapter one, the title chapter, entreats us to "Accentuate the Positive" and describes the barriers of *inaccessibility, belligerence, despondency, anxiety and communication*. Chapter Two is called "Finding Out About Ourselves" and covers activities for children from three to six years. Themes in this chapter are: bodies, mouth, vision, feelings and imagination. Chapter Three, addressing the needs and activities of children seven to twelve years, is called "Discovering Through the Expressive Arts". Themes of this chapter involve children in expression through movement, drama, music, visual arts and sculpture, and feelings and communication. Chapter Four gives an indepth view of large scale adventures such as a musical show, choral reading, wheelchair dancing, and the Spiral Garden project. The last chapter, titled "Disabilities, Distress and Remedial Strategies", discusses problems and remediation activities specific for different groups of children. Nonspeaking children with cerebral palsy are the first of nine

different disability groups to be treated in detail with illustrative cases and activities. An appendix presents tools, instruments and adaptations. There is also a short list of additional reading materials and an index.

As you can see from this summary of the book's contents, there is much that is relevant for children who are nonspeaking and I will leave you to sample the activities and fun. For me, however, the book held two more global messages.

Two Messages

The book is based, in large part, on creative arts as they are experienced and enjoyed by children at the Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre. Creative arts at HMMC are for all students, and missing even five minutes of a class is like losing out on a treat. The success of the Creative Arts program at the centre is due in large part to the tremendous creativity and resourcefulness of the two authors who are skilled in adapting activities to the abilities of the individual students. Students from the sensory stimulation class who are multiply disabled go to creative arts and many nonspeaking children have played important parts in musical shows presented at the centre. The central attitude is that it is always possible to adapt an activity to enable every child to play a meaningful part. I would like to see this approach adopted in every branch of rehabilitation, including, of course, alternative and augmentative communication.

I understand that it is easier to adapt "the staging and lines of a musical show" than it is to adapt "a corner of the world" but it must be done. Here is how Donnelley makes this point: "...our ethical concern should centre on the present and future real possibilities of the suffering worldly actor — on what he or she might possibly do now, on the support of family, friends and health providers, on social services, and on how the world might be altered to facilitate his or her worldly activities" (p.8).

The other important message induced from the book is that almost everything you do as a rehabilitation/AAC professional has, or at least could have, both a sur-

face effect and a deep effect. On the surface you may be addressing a specific function, for example adapting a communication board for use in a classroom play or training a child to use his or her voice output device to speak for a puppet, but through and beneath that you are contributing to the development of a human self. I hope that every rehabilitation/AAC professional will have the commitment and energy, and can make time, to let the deep effects inspire and guide the work on the surface.□

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- Donnelley, S. 1988. Human Selves, Chronic Illness, and the Ethics of Medicine. *Hastings Centre Report*, Vol. 18, No. 2, p 5-8.
- Herman, F. and Smith, J. C. 1988. *Accentuate the Positive! Expressive Arts for Children with Disabilities*; Jimani Publications, 495 Oriole Parkway, Toronto, Ontario M5P 2H9.
(Available from Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3N2. Price, \$18.95 Cdn. plus handling.

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Contact: Maurice Feldman, Conference '89 Chairperson, Surrey Place Centre, 2 Surrey Place, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2C2. Telephone: (416) 925-5141.

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For more information on scheduled Blissymbol Elementary Workshops, or details of the Blissymbolics Independent Study Program, contact: Mrs. Ann Kennedy, Coordinator of Training, Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario Canada M3C 3N2

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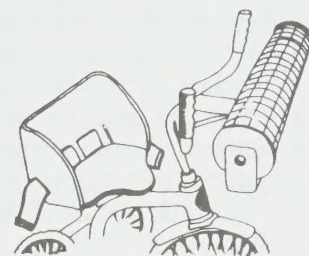
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- Augmentative Communication: a practical course for people who work with cognitively impaired individuals. The course will guide participants through the first steps of establishing an augmentative communication program. Six Tuesday evenings, starting November 1, 1988.

Contact: Training Coordinator, Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario M3N 3N2. Telephone: (416) 421-8377

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Contact: ISAAC Biennial Conference, P.O. Box 3753, Downey, California 90242 USA.

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Guest Speaker: Ms. Carol Cohen
Contact: Pamela Elder, Coordinator Southeast Augmentative Communication Conference, United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham, Inc., 2430 11th Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama 35234 USA.

Augmentative Communication: Interaction from the Beginning

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Guest speaker Dr. Caroline R. Musselwhite. Topics will include augmentative communication, adaptive play and augmentative music for children with severe handicaps. Contact: Christiane C. Marois, P.O. Box 419, Jean Talon Station, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H1S 2Z3. Telephone: (514) 582-3155.

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Contact: Jim Potts, London Board of Education
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About the Publisher

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI), formerly the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, established in 1975, has worked since its inception toward enhancing the lives of nonspeaking people. In its early years the Institute's primary focus was the development and application of Blissymbolics as an augmentative communication system around the world. This role continues through Blissymbolics Communication International, a division of ESCI, but within a broader mandate that reflects the philosophy and perspective of its professional staff.

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Contact: Dr. Harry J. Murphy, California State University, Northridge, 1811 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, California 91330 USA. Telephone: (818) 885-2578
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In Wooster, Ohio

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- October 24-28, 1988
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- October 21-22, 1988

Registration is limited to clinicians, educators, users and others already well-familiar with Minspeak. Space is limited. The conference will feature presentations from individuals who have had significant experience using Minspeak with different populations and in different settings. Concurrent sessions will run both days.

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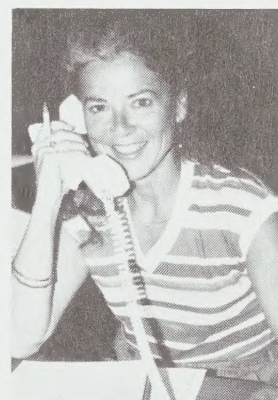
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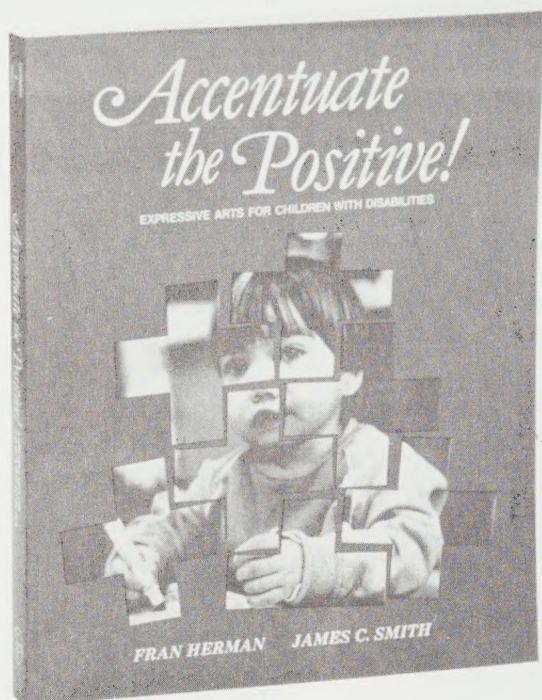
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